

## Commentary

November 14, 1994

# Marking city cemetery

Which grave in the Marietta City Cemetery is visited by the most people? If you said that of Mary Phagan, you'd be correct.

Marietta is rich in history. The old city cemetery on Powder Springs Street is one of its historical jewels. Most of the city's earliest residents are buried there. Some bore names that are still remembered. The city is capitalizing on its past by educating those of us in the present by erecting historical markers throughout the cemetery.

Some of the monuments mark graves whose tombstones are badly worn by age. Others will flesh out details of the sometimes sketchy inscriptions on the headstones. The markers were written based on research by historical consultant Curt Ratledge of Atlanta.

The marker standing by the grave of Miss Phagan reads: "Celebrated in song as 'Little Mary Phagan' after her murder on Confederate Memorial Day 1913 in Atlanta. Grave marked by CSA veterans in 1915. Tribute by Tom Watson set 1933. Leo Frank sentenced to hang, granted clemency before lynching Aug. 17, 1915. His 1986 pardon based on the State's failure to protect him/apprehend killers, not on Frank's innocence."

Many Cobb graduates and fans of the University of Georgia probably have no idea that the man for whom



Bill  
Kinney

Sanford Stadium in Athens is named and buried in the Marietta Cemetery.

His marker reads: "S.V. Sanford. The greatest friend Univ. of Ga. ever had" began his academic career in Marietta: principal, Supt. City Schs. 1892-1903. At Georgia (1903-45) promoted academics & sports: Faculty chrm. athletics from 1908; first head Sch. of Journalism in 1921. President 1931 to 1935; Chancellor of Consolidated University 1935-45. 1929 Stadium named in his honor."

Interestingly, though Sanford had honorary doctorates from Mercer University and UGA, he never earned one the hard way.

And there is the marker for the "Lady in Black." It reads:

"This memorial to Mary Annie Gartrell (1853-1906) was erected by her grieving sister Lucy (1863-1954). Musicians both & natives of Cobb County, Lucy visited this grave from her Atlanta home at least twice weekly for 48

years, many times on foot. Dressed always in mourning clothes, Lucy became known on the streets of Atlanta as 'The Lady in Black.'

Also remembered is William Root, whose house, the oldest in Marietta, is being restored by the Cobb Landmarks & Historical Society. Root's marker reads:

"Beloved merchant, druggist and Episcopalian, he helped found St. James in 1842; in 1844 he built his home across from the church. His 1845 drug store on the square was a town social center. The Root home, one of the oldest wooden houses, and a good specimen of early town architecture, now stands at N. Marietta Pkwy & Polk St. It is open to the public."

It isn't yet, but it will be someday.

Markers also are up at the burial vault of Roswell co-founder Francis Harris McLeod; William Capers G. Harris, whose grave is believed to be the oldest in the cemetery; and the slave lot, where 19 slaves and free blacks were buried between 1848 and 1866.

The city cemetery is one of Marietta's most peaceful places and is rich in history. The city is to be commended for putting up the markers, another idea of late Mayor Joe Mack Wilson.

Bill Kinney is associate editor of the *Marietta Daily Journal*.

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